



New Orleans Personal Computer Club Inc.

Users Helping Users

Vol. XVI No.11

November, 1997

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday
November 5, 1997
6:30 - 9:00 pm

J. D. Meisler School
Cleary At 17th Street – Metairie

Guard on duty
Plenty of free parking
Bring a guest!
free parking

Soft drinks
Sandwiches

Microsoft®

Look for the Microsoft team to be focusing on their Christmas releases, as well as the new Internet Explorer 4.0.

This is also Election Night. Come out for an informative and social evening with the best of the local PC community.

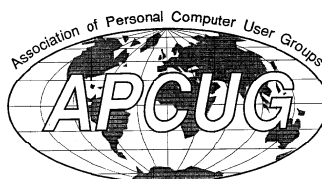


© Copyright 1997 by New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPC). All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to photocopying, recording, or information storage, retrieval — without express written permission from NOPC.

Articles may be reprinted without permission by other User Groups, provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author and NOPC.

Submissions from members and reprints from other User Groups contained in this publication do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Board of Directors or the NOPC membership. Articles are selected for their information value and are not always verified in particulars. We invite your reply on any articles with which you are not in agreement.

This newsletter is published monthly for the membership of NOPC. Unless otherwise stated, articles in this issue are prepared by NOPC members.



Post your contributions to the Club BBS, with a message to alert me or mail (hard copy and floppy) to:

Carole Rike, Editor
4702 Dryades Street
New Orleans, LA 70115
(504) 897-9673
Fax: (504) 897-0125
carole@word-catering.com

MotherBoard Classified Advertising Rates:
 Half Page \$25.00 Annual: \$250
 Full Page \$50.00 Annual: \$500

Business Card:
 1 month: \$12 Annual: \$60

Ads must be camera-ready
 Make all checks payable to NOPC

NOPC OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
 Gary Shurman 838-9999
 Fax: 831-5204
 e-mail: gshurman@software-stuff.com

Executive Vice President
 Dave Freedman 891-8181
 david@wwoz.com

Secretary
 Carole Rike 897-9673
 FAX 897-0125
 carole@word-catering.com

Treasurer
 Paul D'Anna 832-0503
 phd.pc@mail.sstar.com

Past President
 Ed Jatho 834-4386

VOLUNTEERS

APCUG Liason
 Carole Rike 897-9673

Meeting Room Coordinator
 Tom Ford 643-3172

Membership
 Walter Killeen 827-5989

Newsletter
 Zoe Duplantis, Asst. Editor 897-9673
 Frank Masingill, Meeting Reporter frankm@nopc.org
 Robert Ringenberg, Mailings 897-9673

SY SOP
 Lanny Goldfinch 482-5066
 Fax: 486-7249
 lanny@nopc.org

Webmaster
 Manuel Dennis III 835-7656
 e-mail: mdennis@lanyap.com

CLUB RESOURCES

Club Hotline 454-6166
BBS Bulletin Board (4 lines, rollover) 486-7261
NOPC Web Site: <http://www.nopc.org>

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS:

Comm SIG
 Marc W. Lewis 837-7272

FoxPro
 Gary Shurman 838-9999

Genealogy
 Dan Moody 255-4796/1-641-4558

Internet
 Tom Gregory 391-0064
 tgregory@gnofn.org or tomg@mail.sstar.com

Paradox
 Greer Duncan 833-6823

Pro Bono
 Maumus Claverie, Jr 524-5418

SmartSuite
 Elaine Kolp 861-2470

Spreadsheet
 Corrine Lacey 887-1672
 Braum Cook 737-7244

Windows Applications Developers
 Manny Dennis 835-7656

Friends of NOPC

(Individuals & companies who have donated a significant amount of goods or services to NOPC)

McCann's Electronic
Office Depot
New Horizons
Software & Stuff
Computer Emergency Room
Word Catering, Ltd.
Williams, Inc.
Southern Star BBS

members have Internet address:
 your.name@nopc.org

THE OLD RAMBLER

Donald McCune

NOTE: Donald McCune, an active helper with almost anything having to do with setting up club meetings and carrying on projects of interest to member shas graciously agreed to furnish the column this month. Thanks Don!

(Editor's Note: Sorry, I don't have a picture of Donald.)

Frank Masingill loves to explore, to share, and to communicate. Most of all, Frank loves to write — maybe even lives to write, since writing flows from thinking, his greatest pleasure. So, my take on his decision to opt for a month's "vacation" from writing his column is so much malarkey; I think he just wanted me to get my feet wet in printer's ink. This month's Old Rambler column, therefore, is my own Almost-as-old Ramblings.

My own NOPC membership number is four-digit, which marks me as a comparative latecomer. Frank (who celebrated his tenth anniversary of Club membership this year), Lanny, Wally, Zeke, Jeff, Ed, Ashton and many others have three-digit memberships dating back to the first years of the Club. In fact, there are NOPC members who have been around so long that their membership numbers are two-digit! John Souvestre's number is 25, A. J. Levy's is 52, Walter Landry's is 83, and Gary Shurman's member number is 2 — our binary President.

Each of us finds our own special reasons for belonging to this Club. Reaching out in learning new fields, the pleasure of mutual help, the social friendliness of the meetings, the Special Interest Groups, the presentations, the prizes, the usergroup specials, the auction bargains — and the many friendships grown over many years. I find the values of many of these multiplied in online

communication through Fidonet and the Internet.

Darndest thing about our fine members is that relatively few choose to go online to take advantage of the free (yes, FREE) utilities available twenty-four hours a day for their using: the Greater New Orleans Free-Net and many Fidonet bulletin boards in the metro area. Besides our own NOPC BBS (Fidonet 396/1), run by Sysop Lanny Goldfinch, NOPC members John Souvestre (The Southern Star BBS, Fidonet 396/1), Marc Lewis (Sursum Corda! BBS, Fidonet 396/45), and Fr. Lee McColloster (HIOC BBS, 396/40), also have first-rate boards, of which the latter two are free to the user (though donations are accepted).

All of these BBSs are labors of love, end-products of thousands of hours of technical expertise and thousands of dollars of expense, built in the spirit of sharing with everyone this wonderful means of electronic communication: messaging and file distribution.

Each BBS offers both public and private message privileges, including Internet e-mail. As Frank and many others have remarked, Fidonet echos (message areas) possess qualities which appeal to our levelheaded members. Compared to Internet Usegroups, the hundreds of active Fidonet message areas are, by and large, more polite, engaging, literate and informative than their Internet counterparts.

Distribution of files used to be a main function of the BBS. Nowadays, with files of all sorts so readily available by ftp, the Internet and not the BBS is the main arena for that. Personally, I have to admit that, as much as I admire, support and use three local BBSs, most of the files that I download are by ftp via the Greater New

Orleans Free-Net, which is fast, efficient and absolutely free.

Half a decade ago, the user went to the Club BBS for distributed files; now, the Internet is the main line for that. Anyone can go online nowadays and snag the most current file by ftp from anywhere in the world. Hard to compete with that!

Lately, however, the practical matter of time spent online in the getting of files has become a real problem. Much of the time, the Internet has been so clogged that downloads over the Internet come in at a small fraction of the modem's capacity. Compare that with a secure and dependable connection to a local BBS; you can download a file from your BBS just about as fast as your modem will allow. And on some BBSs, such as Marc Lewis' Sursum Corda!, the file has already been thoroughly tested and checked to be virus-free.

Effective speed of download is particularly important when the wanted file is very large. For instance, in the past month, Marc has set up the recent release of Microsoft Internet Explorer v4 Preview 2 for download from Sursum Corda! BBS, split into nine downloadable zip files totaling just over 22 megabytes! (For details, look at the intro screen when logging on to Sursum Corda! BBS.) Just imagine if you went to some Internet site on a slow or balky day. It could take hours, maybe days, if it could be accomplished at all in one session; a good BBS as an alternative to the Internet can be a wonderful convenience.

Another example is the wealth of online books in e-text form available free of charge through Project Gutenberg and other resources. Of course, they are generally available on the Internet from sites such as www.gutenberg.net and sailor.gutenberg.org, but it's a pleasure to report that Project Gutenberg is

flowing again on FidoNet. Hundreds of books are available on NOPC BBS in the BOOK file area, and on Sursum Corda! BBS in file area 10, "Books & Pubs."

Project Gutenberg now has published well over a thousand books, mostly classics in the public domain, including the entire King James Bible in BIBLE10.ZIP, a single zipped file just barely able to fit on one floppy disk. The complete works of Shakespeare is in a single file nearly two megabytes long on download. SHAKS12.ZIP contains the complete and unabridged works of William Shakespeare in a single file of 5 megabytes when unzipped. These large files might be chancy to try downloading over the Internet, but both are available for download on local BBSs, including ones mentioned here.

While I'm at it, let me mention that the complete collection of The Internet "Onramp" columns by Ray Jones, originally printed in the January 1995 through August 1997 issues of The MotherBoard, have been published for your enjoyment in ONRAMP7H.ZIP, available for download at NOPC BBS, Sursum Corda! BBS and The Southern Star BBS.

We have placed the text from all of Ray's columns in one single text file, for your convenience in performing keyword searches to find the topics that interest you. With all the information in ASCII, you won't have to type out the URLs and commands; just copy and paste or print. A reader utility, such as LIST, can be used for searching Ray's columns, as well as for finding exactly what you want in The Bible, Shakespeare, or whatever long file you wish to peruse.

Ray is busy writing, fulfilling a book contract about New Orleans, so his columns are not appearing currently in The MotherBoard. All the better reason to download a copy of ONRAMP7H.ZIP and have his guidance on navigating the net and surfing the web right on your computer for quick reference.

Meanwhile, Ray can be reached at NOPC BBS by netmail; or by e-mail at ray.jones@nopc.org and at rj02@gnofn.org; at his website (<http://www.neosoft.com/~ray-jones/>); through his active "Big Ray's New Orleans Mailing List"; and at the local.gnofn newsgroup on the Free-Net. Or call Ray for the most Internet-knowledgeable cabbie in town.

And, yes, a few final, affectionate words for our Greater New Orleans Free-Net. The thought of doing without this superb public information utility would be as distasteful to me as the idea of going through life without the Public Library. Access to the Free-Net is just as free and natural an exercise as getting and using one's library card. The Free-Net account is absolutely free for every citizen in the Metro New Orleans area.

Sure, the garden-variety Free-Net account is text-only, no "sound and light" online, but its Internet access is as fast and sure as any for obtaining information and files, and for sending and reading e-mail. Once you learn your way around the Free-Net, you'll appreciate its usefulness in nimble web-surfing and ftp of files. Also, if you don't mind bringing a graphic or sound file to your own computer to view or hear, you can even employ the text-only Free-Net to bring sights and sounds from the Internet to you.

The Free-Net has just set up a special-use IRC (Internet Relay Chat) server for hosting special events. The first sessions are on-line workshops to learn how to use IRC. This is a new activity for GNOFN and is another dimension in its capability in online communication.

Presently, NOPC is in the process of putting onto our Internet website most, if not all, of the contents of The MotherBoard. We have our own domain, nopc.org, and a very capable Webmaster in Manuel Dennis. If you haven't visited the NOPC website at www.nopc.org, please do. It's under continuing construction, but NOPC intends to

create a truly informative site for our members and the public.

Lastly, congratulations to Gerry McCann on fifteen years of AM radio broadcasting "Living with Home Electronics" every Saturday morning. Gerry says he has the longest running infomercial in Metro New Orleans. Much more than that, he brings us a genial, sympathetic and leisurely look at the computer and consumer electronics scene from the business professional's viewpoint.

Well, now that I've started, it's hard to shut me up. Thank goodness, Frank will be back next month with the real Old Rambler column. If I can muster enough good news for the printing, look in future issues of The MotherBoard, keyword: HypoLink.

Meanwhile, good reader, if you have opinion, response or request on anything I've talked about, please drop me a line at NOPC BBS or by e-mail at dcm01@gnofn.org.

Special Pricing on cadtools

CADtools for Adobe Illustrator 7, Mac or Windows, is available for \$99 when ordered directly from Hot Door and mentioning their ad, effective until 12/31/97. This is a \$50 savings.

Hot Door CADtools adds 34 new precision drawing tools to Illustrator. Draw and measure artwork in any scale, add dimensions with a mouse click, and create labels and call-outs. The program offers a wide range of preferences which allow you to customize terminators, dimension lines, text placement, scale, units, chamfer and fillet measurements and wall thicknesses.

HotDoor Inc. P. O. Box 3041, Long Beach, CA 90803, 888-236-9540 or online at

The Presidents Column

By Gary Shurman

It's election time again. The Nominating Committee made their nominations at the October board meeting and the election will be held at the November general meeting. We have been using a printed, mail-in, ballot for the last few years. Since last year we received only two ballots in the mail the Board voted to do away with the paper ballots and go back to good old hand raising. This saves the club a bunch of money and makes it easier for those members who were not on the Nominating Committee's list to become candidates. If you want to nominate someone or you would like to run yourself just speak up when we ask for nominations. As long as your dues are current and you want to do your bit to help the club we want you to run. If you don't win election or you would rather just volunteer to help please let me know as we need all of the help we can get.

There are many volunteer tasks that take less than an hour a month. We need help in Public Relations (fax meeting announcements to the newspapers, radio & TV stations). Help the Treasurer. Work with the Membership Secretary or Help with the Motherboard. The Motherboard could use someone to keep track of the ads. There are all kinds of little things that don't require a lot of work, but will make everything in the club run smoother. If you don't have time to write the great American novel, how about writing a short article for the Motherboard. Write something about what it's like to be a new user or what software you just bought that won't work, or who's technical support is outstanding, or an interesting Web page.

Now that the club is in good financial health it's time to concentrate on some other areas. The board is looking into strengthening the SIG groups (see my separate article in this issue),



getting the newsletter on the Web site, more educational content and public service projects.

See you at the November meeting.

NOPC Special Interest Groups (SIGS)

By Gary Shurman

The SIGS are small groups, within NOPC, that meet once or twice a month to pursue subjects in more depth than can be presented at the General Meeting. I feel that the SIGS are the place where members can go to get more individual help than is available during the hustle and bustle of the General Meeting and be surrounded by others with the same interests.

SIGS are easy to form and require only a meeting place and a group of NOPC members (all SIG members must be NOPC members) that have a common interest. If you would start a new SIG or revive an old or inactive one, see me or any board member and we will get you going.

Because Personal Computing has made such major leaps in such a short time, our current PC and supporting equipment is rather obsolete. I will be making a proposal at the November Board Meeting that the club obtain new hardware and software that will

allow us to better serve the SIGS. I want to have a PC that runs Windows 95 and has the capacity to run most of the current applications.

Finally, to make sure that everyone knows what SIGS are available, when they meet and how to contact them, we need a SIG Coordinator. All you need for this position is the time to telephone each SIG leader every month to get their information and then send that information to the Motherboard Editor and the Web Master.

Where is the new projector?

By Gary Shurman

Where is the new projector that we raised funds for with the raffle? Well here's where we are. We raised about \$1,200.00 which is in the bank. The cost of the all-in-one projectors is in the \$4,500.00 to \$6,000.00 range. No one was willing to give us one or even make a better deal than some of the members could get wholesale.

The projector would be used when a speaker did not have their own. This happens about twice a year. Even if we used the projector every month it would cost us over \$200.00 per month to own it, not counting supplies and repairs. We have also been told that the projection bulbs are very expensive and that these systems are a bit delicate. Because of the value of the projector and its delicate nature, it would not be practical to leave it at the school or let the SIGS borrow it.

I suggest that the club would be better served, and our funds better utilized, if we rented a projector for the couple of times that we need it and get the speaker's company to pay for all or part of the rental. I would further suggest that we use the monies that we

currently have in the bank for the projector to be used to immediately acquire as much equipment as we can beg, borrow or buy for the SIGS to use.

I would like to see a decent Pentium PC with MMX, sound and enough RAM to run today's applications and another PC that could become a little file server so that we could delve into networking.

Let me know how you feel about this. Call me at 838-9999 or e-mail me at gshurman@software-stuff.com, or send a message to my Point on the BBS.

Changes to the NOPC Charter and Bylaws

By Gary Shurman

The following are changes that are required to the NOPC Charter and Bylaws to eliminate some contradictions between the two documents and in some places within the same document. The changes have been signed by five members of NOPC and will be voted upon at the November GENERAL Meeting.

Proposed Changes to the New Orleans Personal Computer Club, Inc. Charter

ARTICLE 7. Board of Directors.

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the following individuals:

- a. All officers of the NOPC Club
- b. Chairman of the Special Interest Groups as defined by the NOPC Club Bylaws.
- c. Other persons as designated by the Board of Directors.

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and any others according to the NOPC Club's Bylaws.

Proposed Changes to the New Orleans Personal Computer Club, Inc. Bylaws

ARTICLE IV. Board of Directors

Section 5. Board of Directors shall consist of 7 members, said Directors being members in good standing of NOPC Club and elected by general membership at the annual election.

Section 5. In addition to the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, the Board of Directors shall include five (5) additional "at large" directors elected from the club's membership. Additionally the Chairperson of any Special Interest Group that meets the requirements of Section V: Special Interest Groups (SIGS), shall be a member of the Board of Directors as long as the SIG continues to meet the requirements of Section V.

ARTICLE VI. Directors

Section 1. Subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, the President shall appoint the following to the Board of Directors:

- a. Newsletter Editor
- b. Membership Secretary
- c. Software Librarian
- d. Group Purchases Coordinator
- e. RBBS System Operator
- f. Educational Coordinator
- g. Program Coordinator
- h. Public Relations Coordinator

Section 1. Subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, the President shall appoint the following to the Board of Directors if another Board

Member is not already fulfilling the function:

- a. Newsletter Editor
- b. Membership Secretary
- c. RBBS System Operator
- d. Internet Web Master
- e. Program Coordinator
- f. Public Relations Coordinator

ARTICLE VIII. Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee is composed of all NOPC Club Officers.

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

WAD SIG

Upcoming WADSIG topics that may interest developers:

DDE, OLE, VBX, OCX, ActiveX.COM, DCOM Explained
William Saussaye
Tuesday, November 4, 1997
New Horizons Training Center

Creating Wizards in Visual Basic
Sal Cardinale
November 20, 1997
New Horizons Training Center

Home Automation
George Rae
December 2, 1997
New Horizons Training Center

All meetings begin at 6:30 with the speaker going on at 7:00. New Horizons is located on the N. I-10 Service Rd. In the Favrot and Shane Building, Suite 117.

The New Chip on the Block

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Move over Cyrix! AMD? Out of the way! Hey, Intel? Look out! I just fired up a system with a new processor and from my unscientific tests, I'll tell you what: they'd better start worrying.

The processor is the WinChip C6, a 200MHz chip from Centaur Technology, a new company that's a subsidiary of Integrated Device Technology.

With the way Intel's scrambling—lowering prices and releasing fast chips earlier than expected—new processors are big news. In fact, the major magazines are looking at the WinChip C6, including PC World. (Their evaluation is in the December 1997 issue, Top of the News, or at <http://www.pcworld.com>. You might also look at November's ["K6-266 Challenges PII-266 on Price/ Performance"] on page 70 or online.)

Technically Speaking

Here's how the chip stacks up: The WinChip C6 is currently available at 180 MHz / 60 MHz bus and 200 MHz / 66 MHz bus versions. It uses an original RISC implementation—x86 micro-architecture—with 5,400,000 transistors and 88 mm².

The chip is manufactured with four layers of metal interconnect and the die is bonded into a standard 296-pin grid array ceramic package. It's Socket 7 compliant and compatible with the Pentium pin-out. It also has a selectable operating voltage of either 3.3v or 3.52v.

That means you can pop the WinChip C6 into older single voltage (rail) Pentium motherboards (which usually can't use CPUs with a 2.8/3.3 dual voltage requirement) and most dual rail models. So if you have a single-voltage

motherboard with an older single-voltage Pentium chip, you can upgrade it with this WinChip C6. Before attempting a retrofit with any of the upgrade chips, you should confirm that your PC is a candidate for a WinChip. (Check compatibility lists on their web site.)

One possible stumbling block is that for the WinChip to be recognized by your system, you must have the right BIOS: The current versions of Award 4.5x, AMI, Phoenix, or System Soft BIOS will all work.

Had enough technical specs? Don't kid me, of course you want more. You can spend hours, no, days, reading about the chip's architecture at Centaur's web site: <http://www.winchip.com>.

The Test System

I tested the chip on a preconfigured system. The motherboard, a Spacewalker Holco Shuttle 565, uses an Intel 430 TX chip set, Award 4.53 BIOS, and 512k L1 cache memory. It came with 32MB of 60ns EDO DRAM, a Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 video card with 2MB EDO DRAM, and a Western Digital 2.1GB drive.

How'd it Work?

I'll admit that at first I was reluctant to try a non-Intel processor. Last year I looked at the NexGen—my first experience with a clone chip—and discovered compatibility problems. I had to run a small NexGen utility before loading some applications needing a math coprocessor. So I loaded over 20 programs onto the WinChip system, including utilities, games, shareware and freeware, and business application suites.

And I experienced absolutely no

compatibility problems with the WinChip C6.

Overall, I was also impressed with the WinChip's performance. Every business application I used performed well. And that's the first qualifier: The WinChip C6 is designed primarily for use with business software. It's not a gamers system. The performance of WinWord, WordPerfect, Excel, QuickBooks, PowerPoint, Lotus's Approach, Eudora Pro, and similar programs, all exceeded my expectations.

But I didn't see much of a performance gain for Ventura Publisher, my desktop publishing program, or any of the MMX-driven games I tried. I'm not saying I couldn't run Duke Nuke 'em or Quake (God forbid), it's just that it didn't work any faster or better than on my Intel 166MHz system.

I also installed some of the more outrageous peripherals I had around the office into the WinChip system. For example, I stuck a writeable CD-ROM drive, and a DirectDuo Satellite Internet card. Both worked fine.

Oh, Yeah... The Price

Centaur is trying to sell these chips to third-tier companies—local value added resellers (VARs) and integrators. Companies many of us already buy clones from—in Pasadena, Jet Research Labs, PC System Design, and MicroTrends. Centaur is approaching the user group community, those people who tinker with computers, willing to crack the case and get bytes under their fingernails.

Right now, an AMD K-6 chip, without a systemboard, runs about \$175 and an Intel 200MHz is about \$230. My guess is the WinChip C6 will run around \$135 to begin

with, perhaps dropping to \$110 after a few months.

If you're comfortable upgrading your existing system by yourself, you'll probably be able to pick up a WinChip at the swap meet. However, don't count on tech support when you buy at the swaps. For that, you'll need to buy the WinChip at a large upgrade company, say, Evergreen Technologies (541/757-0934; www.evertch.com.)

Steve Bass is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group, a Contributing Editor with PC World, and writes the Gizmo column for Computer Currents.

Adobe User Group Specials

Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2.0: (Mac and Windows) Customize your photos with special effects and step-by-step simplicity. UG Price: \$39

Adobe Art Explorer 1.1 Deluxe CD: (Mac) Learn about art on the computer while jazzing up homework, creating comic books, writing newsletters, designing fashions. UG Price: \$19.99

Adobe HomePublisher 2.1 (Mac): A complete publishing solution for home or office documents with over 2,000 clipart images. UG Price: \$39.99.

Adobe Type Twister: (Windows and Mac): Gives you type-enhancing capabilities. UG Price: \$19.99.

Call 800-888-6293 and mention offer #35700.

Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator Plug-In Tools: Xaos Tools' plug-ins for \$129. Typecaster lets you create 3D type with textures, etc. Also Terrazo, Paint Alchemy. Call 1-800-BUY-XAOS and mention offer code ADB1. Act by October 31 and receive free T-shirt and 80

From the Lighter Side

From: GerMcCann@aol.com

Quotes Taken from actual performance evaluations:

"Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and shows signs of starting to dig."

"His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity."

"I would not allow this employee to breed."

"This associate is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't be."

"Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap."

"When she opens her mouth, it seems that this is only to change whichever foot was previously in there."

"He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle."

"This young lady has delusions of adequacy."

"He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them."

"This employee should go far—and the sooner he starts, the better."

"This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot."

Origami: The Secret Life of Paper

Crane, gyroscope, frog, iris, pagoda, star and more! Choose any project and learn its history. Step-by-step folding instructions plus a QuickTime movie.

- Free Origami paper to get you started
- Learn to make your own Origami paper from junk mail
- Stories and interviews from over 30 countries
- Over 100 full motion videos, 300 color photos
- Gallery with over 150 beautiful Origami figures
- Origami history, reference, and bibliography

Minimum requirements: Windows 3.x or '95, 486 processor with 8 MB RAM, 256 colors, 2x CD-ROM

Special User Group Price: \$29.95 (regular \$59.95).

Casady & Greene, 22734 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93908; 800-359-4920; www.casadyg.com

The First Personal Computer

by Werner Buchholz

This article was originally printed in the July 1997 issue of microCHIP (micro Computer Happenings In Poughkeepsie), the newsletter of the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group.

The first issue of this microCHIP newsletter appeared in 1977, and its name referred to the microprocessors used in the then novel desktop machines which had attracted the attention of hobbyists and other early users. But were they the first personal computers? Many people think so, and if you consult, for example, Van Nostrand's "Encyclopedia of Computer Science," its article on Personal Computing begins with "The personal computer has been in existence only since 1974..." and points to the MITS Altair.

The answer really depends on how you define a personal computer. If you insist on a machine small enough to fit on a desk, the Altair may well have been the first, even though it had hardly enough capabilities to do much useful work. Better examples might be Radio Shack's TRS-80 or the Apple II, both of which appeared a few years later. If, on the other hand, you define a personal computer as a computer that is specifically designed to be used by a single person, you may have to go back about another 20 years to an IBM product that barely saw the light of day.

My nominee for the first personal computer is what was formally called the IBM 610 Auto-Point Computer, which was announced in 1957. It was the brainchild of John J. Lentz, a member of the Watson Laboratory - not the big IBM research lab. in Yorktown but an earlier one near Columbia University in New York City.

According to the book "IBM's Early Computers" by Bashe, et al, Lentz started experimenting in 1948 with circuits for use in a "personal computer" (p. 530). Later the project became known as the "Personal Automatic Calculator (PAC)." Lentz had an engineering model completed in 1954, but the machine remained in limbo until 1957, when its production was turned over to, of all things, IBM's division responsible for making time clocks and scales. With the long delay and with salesmen who knew nothing about computing, this was a sure death sentence for the machine.

As you can see from a photo on p. 506 in the Bashe book, the 610 was far from a small machine and, with a purchase price of \$55,000, it was well out of range of amateur users. (I had a chance to play with it once in the Poughkeepsie lab.) The machine could be run like a desk calculator from a keyboard. For repeated calculations one could have the machine record the keystrokes on punched paper tape

during a session with sample data and then play back the program for each run with stops for manually entering new data. Alternatively one could punch both the program and data for different runs on paper tape and have the whole executed automatically.

A feature of the 610, and the reason for the name "auto-point," was that it could do arithmetic on 31-digit decimal numbers with the decimal point moving back and forth depending on the number of digits required to the left and right of the point in the result. This mode, which is intermediate between fixed-point and floating-point arithmetic, appeared again later in handheld electronic calculators.

Some might object to calling the 610 a computer because it could not store the program on its magnetic-drum memory and thus was not a stored-program machine.

If that is part of your definition, you would have to look for another candidate, perhaps in the 1960s, for a first. I prefer to put the emphasis on "personal" and "automatic," for which the 610 qualified at least up to a point (no pun intended). The credit for a first certainly belongs to a machine that existed well before the 1970s.

Forget Killer Bees

An army of computer-eating ants from the genus *Monomorium*, immune to many pesticides, are munching their way north from Brazil and could cripple technology across the U.S. Lured by the warmth of terminals, which resemble anthills, they feast on the sweet protective gel that coats circuit boards, exposing them to short circuits and corrosion. The

ants also sabotage telephone circuitry, televisions and other products containing computer circuit boards.

With the international trade in computer technology, the ants could spread anywhere in the world. The best protection is to keep desktops free of food that might attract ants, so that they

lose interest before they reach your computer and its banquet of circuitry.

Cousins of the computer-eaters were found to have eaten through the wiring of the world's largest superconductor while under construction in Texas and short-circuiting the system in the now-abandoned project.

— Express, 20 May 1997

SOUTHERN STAR BBS

Internet 25 Gigs, 10 lines FidoNet
bbs.sstar.com 504-885-5928 1:396/1
E-Mail & News New Orleans, LA Backbone Mail
Telnet & FTP V.32b/V34+ Filebone Files

SysOp: John Souvestre (504) 888-3348
P. O. Box 7335, Metairie, LA 70010

SOUTHERN STAR INTERNET

SMTP & POP3 & NNTP www.sstar.com Custom Services
V32b/V34 +/56K/ISDN (504) 831-7907 Domain Hosting
Digital Phone Lines Digital Modems Extra Mailboxes
Free Personal WWW Page New Orleans, LA Dedicated Lines

Information: johns@sstar.com (504) 888-3348
Tech Support: help@communique.net (504) 527-6208



BUY • SELL • TRADE

Specializing in U.S. Type Coins
A.N.A. • L.N.A.

Rick's Coins

Rick Demers

P. O. Box 8586 Metairie, LA 70011 Phone: 504-455-4468
E-Mail: rick.dem@ix.netcom.com

Election Slate:

President: Gary Shurman

Vice President: David
Freedman

Treasurer: Tom Ford

Secretary: Leonard Bronik

Board at Large
(5 elected)

Charlie Zimmerman

Walter Killeen

Paul D'Anna

Ashton Mouton

Lane Bonham

Marc Lewis

John Souvestre

Donald McCune

Manny Dennis

Who

The Computer Emergency Room
"We Fix Sick Computers:"



Buy • Sell • Trade
New/Used PC Equipment

E. W. "Ed" Jatho, Jr.
3807 Airline Drive • Metairie, LA 70001
Phone: 834-4386
Fax: 834-4387

NOPC Membership Application

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal Membership No.: _____ Date: _____
☐ No change
☐ Address Correction

Please list your name as well as your membership number in order
for this form to be processed!

Name: _____ First Name for Badge: _____

Name of Additional Household Member: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Age: _____

Business Phone: _____ Extension: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Company: _____

I am interested in helping with the following Club Committees:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auction | <input type="checkbox"/> SIG Groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBS | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Facilities | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | |

Dues:

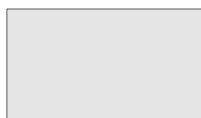
- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member | \$ 40.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | \$ 60.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership | \$ 20.00 |

Paid By: ☐ Check _____ ☐ Cash ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Account Number

Expiration Date: ____/ ____ Auth: ____

New Orleans Personal Computer Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 8364
Metairie, LA 70011



NEW ORLEANS PERSONAL COMPUTER CLUB

WHY NOPC?

Founded in 1981 and a Louisiana non-profit organization, NOPC is composed of individual personal computer users who help each other learn more about their personal computers and its wide variety of applications.

WHO SHOULD BE A NOPC MEMBER?

If you own, use, or are considering the purchase of a personal computer, you will find the NOPC learning experience and the opportunity to exchange information invaluable.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP?

Monthly meetings highlight topics of current interest and the latest developments in the micro-computer industry, focusing on how new technology will affect you. Members discuss common problems and participate in a beneficial exchange of information. Meetings are preceded by informal discussion and pointers for new users and tech talk sessions.

A monthly newsletter (*The MotherBoard*) contains helpful hints, new product reviews, and miscellaneous articles of interest written by our Club members or extracted from other personal computer publications and newsletters.

As a member of the American Association of PC User Groups (APCUG), NOPC has access to a large database of vendors and industry involvement.

Occasional Flea Markets provide a place to sell or trade those extra bits of hardware and software you may have accumulated.

Vendor displays allow you to see what is available from our local vendors, often at a discount to members.

Monthly, members bring software and hardware to the meeting for the general auction. This may be the only place to find an old DOS manual or other equipment no longer readily available at retail outlets.

NOPC operates a general interest Bulletin Board 24-hours a day for members. The board has many shareware programs, FidoNet, information about meetings and Special Interest Groups. The Bulletin Board also serves as the NOPC message center and provides Internet access.

NOPC provides a forum for smaller groups with special interests to meet in an informal setting. Several SIG groups meet monthly.

WHERE AND WHEN:

The Club meets on the first Wednesday of each month in J. D. Meisler School, Cleary at 17th, off Veterans Highway. The meeting begins at 6:30 P.M.

HOW TO JOIN:

Come to a meeting and fill out a Membership Form. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a current membership application.

**BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEW ORLEANS, LA.
PERMIT NO. 777**

P. O. Box 8364
Metairie, LA 70011